



**CITY OF NEW HAVEN  
BOARD OF ALDERS**

***Sarah Miller***  
Alder, Ward 14

29 Clinton Avenue  
New Haven, CT 06513-3102

---

Member  
Education Committee  
City Services and Environmental Policy Committee  
Health & Human Services Committee  
Youth Commission  
Development Commission  
School Readiness Council

---

Telephone: (203) 675-9516  
ward14@newhavenct.gov

**Testimony on HB 6166 - An Act Concerning Expansion of HUSKY Health Benefits to those  
Ineligible due to Immigration Status**

February 13, 2023

Dear Senator Lesser, Senator Seminara, Representative Gilchrest, Representative Case, and  
members of the Human Services Committee,

I write as a lifelong New Haven resident and member of the New Haven Board of Alders representing the Fair Haven neighborhood. Our neighborhood has a long history as New Haven's landed immigrant community and today its population and cultural life are largely Latine. This demographic represents 64% percent of residents and is comprised of immigrants from across Latin America, many of whom are undocumented. In addition, Fair Haven is one of the most youthful populations in the city and state: 31% of residents under the age of 18, in contrast with 23% in New Haven as a whole and 21% in Connecticut overall. Our neighborhood also bears one of the highest poverty rates in the city and state, with 33% of families living below the Federal poverty line and 59% classified as low-income.<sup>1</sup>

**Our community needs you to pass HB 6616, An Act Concerning Expansion Of Husky Health Benefits To Those Ineligible Due To Immigration Status, out of committee in its current form. The need for healthcare access does not end at age 12 or age 18. Expanding up to age 26 would align with the Affordable Care Act and extend desperately needed healthcare to a vulnerable population of youth and young adults.** In order for Connecticut's future to include healthy families and a stable, thriving

---

<sup>1</sup> 2020 DataHaven Neighborhood Profiles: Fair Haven <https://www.ctdatahaven.org/communities>.

workforce ready to meet the needs of our future, we must first ensure that individuals up to age 26 have access to health coverage, regardless of immigration status.

**Many of my neighbors are currently denied healthcare and a chance at survival because of their immigration status.** While we know that the best healthcare decisions are made by patients and their doctors, right now the state decides for many immigrants what healthcare they can and can't get. Lack of access to healthcare means more emergency department visits and hospitalizations. It means that chronic health issues, such as diabetes and heart disease, are more likely to develop into serious conditions that require more medical interventions and carry large costs. **This bill would reverse this trajectory** and provide savings to hospitals from reduced uncompensated care costs that could amount to roughly \$63.3 million. The potential benefits to our economy and civic and cultural life are no less dramatic.

**Immigrants comprise a significant percentage of the essential workforce** that kept us all afloat during the COVID-19 pandemic. If we want Connecticut to truly recover from the impacts of COVID-19, we must work toward ensuring that undocumented immigrants of all ages can access health care. Leaving undocumented parents and adults behind means leaving a large portion of essential workers on the frontlines of the pandemic behind.

In addition, we all know that healthy kids need healthy families. It has been proven over and over that when parents and caregivers have access to health care, their children are more likely to be insured and to use and receive care. **If we want healthy kids who are prepared to succeed, the best way to achieve that is to have healthy parents**—but currently, we're leaving undocumented parents behind.

Now is the time to make a historic leap forward and pass HB 6166 out of committee in its current form. Our state faces a multibillion-dollar surplus and overflowing Rainy Day Fund. Our wealthiest corporations and residents are prospering. At the same time, immigrant residents of my community cannot access basic healthcare. **Access to healthcare is a human right, and we have a historic opportunity this session** to make a course correction and expand HUSKY access to age 26, regardless of immigration status.

Thank you for your hard work on behalf of the children and families of our state.

Alder Sarah Miller